

**Vermont Department of Health Laboratory
195 Colchester Avenue, P.O. Box 1125
Burlington, VT 05402-1125
(802)863-7335 (800)660-9997 (in-state only)**

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR COLLECTION AND PACKAGING OF NASOPHARYNGEAL
SPECIMENS FOR BORDETELLA PERTUSSIS CULTURE
VDH KIT # 5**

PLEASE READ INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY BEFORE COLLECTING SPECIMEN

In order to comply with postal regulations and ensure the safety of laboratory personnel and those involved in the transport of specimens, and to maintain integrity of the sample, the Vermont Department of Health Laboratory will accept for testing only those specimens that are packaged according to the instructions below.

The kit should contain:

- Insulated shipping container
- Container(s) of cold pack (e.g., Gel-Pak)
- 1 Regan Lowe agar plate and one labeled tube of Regan- Lowe charcoal medium
- 1 nasopharyngeal swab (dacron swab on flexible aluminum shaft)
- Cardboard tube mailer with metal inner container for tube of Regan Lowe charcoal medium
- Specimen transport bag
- Clinical test request form (Micro 220)
- Collection Instructions (Micro 412)

Instructions

Storage: Store all Regan Lowe agar medium in refrigerator at 2-8°C (36-46°F) until needed. Note expiration date. Return expired kits to the Vermont Department of Health Laboratory. Do not use outdated media or media that shows signs of degrading, or contamination before the expiration date. Freeze the cold pack (e.g., Gel-Pak) until use. Save the insulated shipping containers for shipment of specimens back to the VDH Lab.

Collection of Specimen: Try to collect the specimen as soon as possible after the onset of symptoms (the organism is most often recovered during the catarrhal or early paroxysmal stages and is seldom isolated after the fourth week of illness) and before antibiotics are administered. Antibiotics will usually prevent recovery of Bordetella pertussis.

1. Warm medium to room temperature (30 minutes) before inoculation.
2. Affix patient name label to plate bottom.
3. Print patient name and date of collection on the labeled tube and culture plate.
4. Pass the swab through a nostril into the Nasopharynx. The swab should induce a cough; leave the swab in during the cough, or for approximately 5-10 seconds.
5. After collecting the specimen:
Inoculate 1/4 of the agar plate surface, near the edge of the medium.
PLEASE NOTE: do not inoculate the entire plate or streak for isolation.
6. Push the swab into the Regan Lowe charcoal medium tube, leaving the swab in the tube. This is very important as the organism is recovered from the nasopharyngeal swab. Bend the wire shaft of the swab so the cap can be screwed on the tube tightly.
7. Screw the cap on the Regan Lowe agar tube, place it in the inner metal container and then into the cardboard mailer for transport.
8. Secure the lid to the agar plate with two pieces of tape on either side (do not seal the plate completely).

9. Fill out the requisition form completely. All information is required to ensure accurate and efficient processing of the specimen and reporting of test results:

* Patient name, address and date of birth
* Date of collection

*Medical provider name and address
*Type of specimen & test requests

10. Place the requisition in the outside pocket of the specimen transport bag.
11. If not transporting the specimens to the Vermont Department of Health Laboratory immediately, refrigerate the plate and tube overnight at 4°C. (For Friday specimen collections, continue to store the specimen at 4°C until Monday, and then ship the specimens to the laboratory immediately).
12. After overnight or weekend refrigeration, place the tubed specimen cardboard mailer and taped culture plate into the resealable pouch of the specimen transport bag.

Shipment of Specimen:

1. Specimen must be shipped cold, and in the insulated container. **For optimal recovery of *B. pertussis*, specimen(s) should arrive at the laboratory within 1 day of collection. Specimen(s) received after 4 days from the date of collection will be rejected.**
2. Just before shipping, verify labeling and completeness of requisition form. Pack specimens in insulated container with cold pack or refrigerate. Ship by fastest means to the Laboratory. Time in transit should not exceed 24 hours. For this reason, mail is not recommended.

THE LABORATORY WILL DECONTAMINATE AND DISCARD ANY SPECIMEN WHICH IS IMPROPERLY PACKAGED AND MAY PRESENT A RISK TO PERSONNEL.

The specimen may be rejected if:

- Date of specimen collection is missing on the specimen and form
- Patient name is missing on the specimen and form
- Medical provider name /address is missing on the form
- Transport medium has expired
- Specimen frozen or exposed to extreme temperature
- Specimen is received more than 4 days after collection.

If you have any comments or questions regarding these instructions, please call one of the telephone numbers listed on the front of this form. Thank you,